

California Department of Fish and Game Deer Management Program
<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/deer/index.htm>

California's deer herds are a valuable resource to both hunters and non-hunters alike. Deer can be seen throughout most of California providing enjoyment for many outdoor enthusiasts. For future generations to experience the benefits that come from having healthy, viable deer herds throughout the state, proper management is essential.

The Deer Management Program is composed of branch and field biologists who work together coordinating programs throughout the state. The Deer Management Program, its activities, and staff are largely supported by hunters through the purchase of hunting licenses and deer tags. Biologists develop hunting regulations, provide expertise on habitat and population assessments, compile harvest information, conduct and direct research needs, monitor and estimate populations and respond to various public inquiries related to deer in California. Biologists also work to coordinate joint projects with outside agencies, universities and private entities.

In 1976 A Plan for California Deer was developed to respond to the decline in deer numbers resulting from the loss and degradation of quality deer habitat. With the growing human population in California and continuing loss of quality deer habitats, biologists have realized the goal to restore deer herd numbers to those in the 1960s is unlikely and unrealistic. Biologists are currently developing a more realistic approach through a Strategic Plan for California Deer in order to more effectively manage deer herds given the existing and anticipated changes to California's environment.

In addition, important deer habitats are identified through statewide surveys and investigations conducted throughout the year. Based on these investigations, the data are used for analysis of local and statewide land-use planning efforts, as well as providing recommendations to the Lands Committee for possible land acquisition through the Wildlife Conservation Board.